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The Amnesty Again

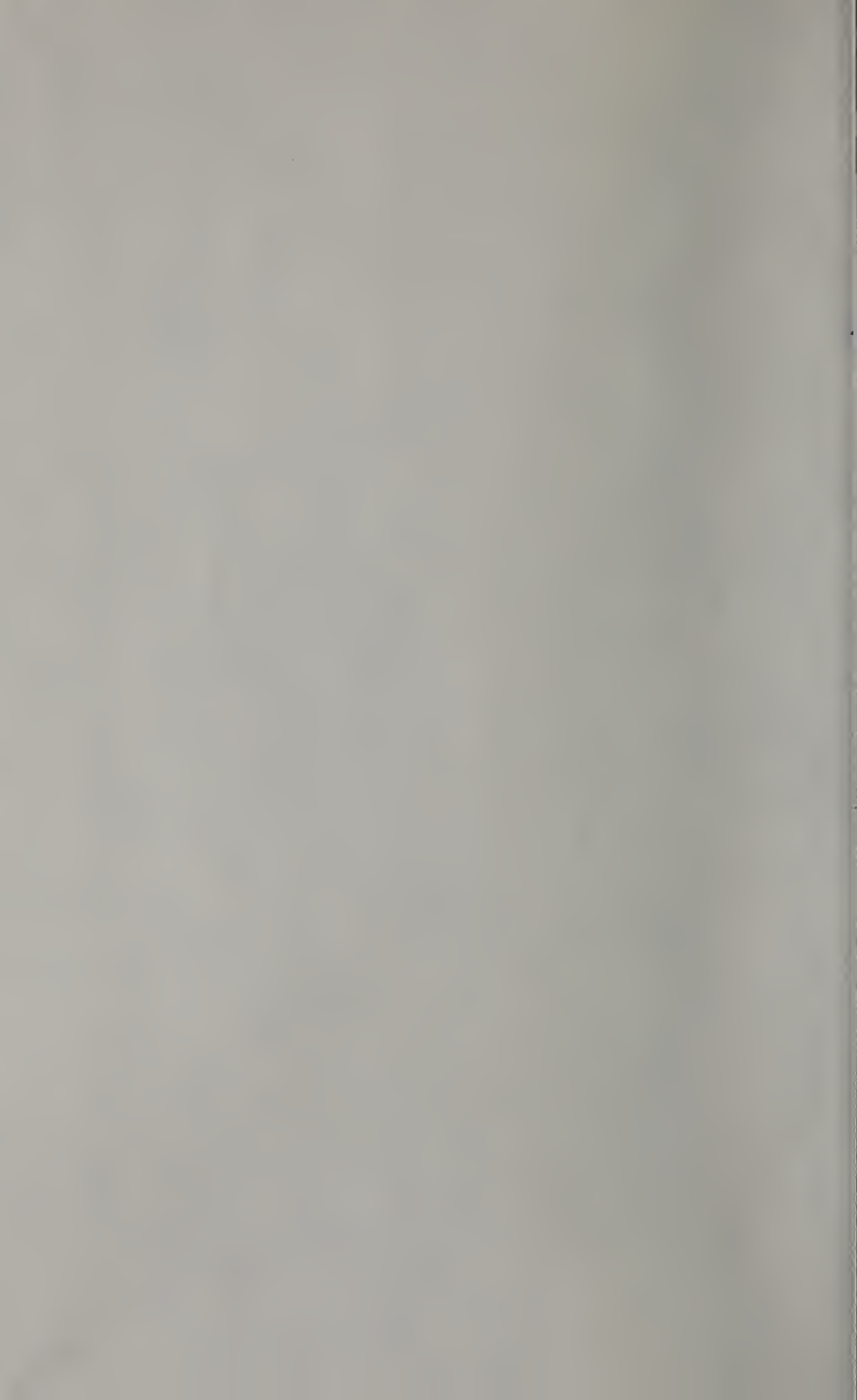
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THE AMNESTY AGAIN,

OR

CHARGES REFUTED

BY

His Grace Archbishop Tache

OF ST. BONIFACE, MANITOBA.

(Translated from the French.)

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THE AMNESTY AGAIN ;

OR,

CHARGES REFUTED.

BY

MONSEIGNEUR TACHÉ, ARCHBISHOP OF ST. BONIFACE.

“Despatches concerning the commutation of Lepine’s sentence and North-West Amnesty have been officially published.” Resolutions, said to be the consequences of such despatches, have been presented by the Government of Ottawa, to the House of Commons, and carried by a large majority.

Although it may be observed with reason, that the matter which gave rise to those despatches and resolutions has been already too often repeated, nevertheless, the Amnesty being to me a question of honor and justice, I consider myself bound to speak of it anew.

Five years have been employed to attain even a superficial knowledge of the facts that constitute the basis of the solution of our difficulties ; the vote of the majority of the Commons affirms, that five years more are needed to give them a definitive solution.

Prompted by circumstances and individuals to take an eminent position in the appeasing of the North-West troubles, I am under the obligation of speaking of amnesty, as long as it is not granted, full and entire, as understood by me.

Moreover the above-mentioned documents reflect too directly on myself for it to be possible for me to remain silent. Those who brought forward my name in them, and then laid them

before the public, cannot find fault with me for noticing what they themselves assert. Consequently, my intention is to make a few observations, firstly, on the despatches exchanged between Earls Dufferin and Carnarvon, concerning the Amnesty ; secondly, on the Resolutions of the Honorable Mr. Mackenzie on the same subject.

OBSERVATIONS ON LORD DUFFERIN’S DESPATCH OF 10TH DEC., 1874, AND ON LORD CARNARVON’S ANSWER, DATED 7TH JANUARY, 1875.

It is with the utmost reluctance that I enter upon the subject, in the point of view imposed upon me. It is peculiarly painful to come forward to criticise an official document, issued by His Excellency the Governor-General.

By inclination as well as by conviction, not only do I respect authority, but the same feeling extends to those who are invested with it. Hence my deep regret at being obliged to contradict the Representative of Our Beloved Sovereign.

I trust, however, that if the Right Honorable Earl Dufferin will condescend to attentively peruse the following pages, he will agree that I have a right to exclaim against the unjust treatment to which I have been submitted. The

noble sentiments which distinguish His Excellency are, in my estimation, a sufficient guarantee that he will not resent a defence to which I have been provoked.

I willingly believe that the attacks were not dictated by any ill feeling, but, coming from such high quarters, it is impossible to allow them to be recorded by history without venturing to refute them.

It is undoubtedly to be deplored that public excitement, a lack of knowledge of persons and places, owing to their distance, and, moreover, the multiplicity of other important obligations should have prevented His Excellency from acquiring an exact view of certain facts, mentioned in his despatch of 10th December last. I shall, however, avoid pointing out any thing else than what concerns myself directly and personally, or that has been affirmed by me.

I decline the painful task of contradicting His Excellency on other points of the despatch. At all events I feel satisfied that Lord Dufferin coming forward as an official historian, had no doubt as to his being, at the time, a truthful one.

The 10th paragraph of the Despatch is inaccurate in stating that my letter to Honorable Mr. Howe informed him that I had promised an amnesty in the name of the *Imperial Government*. A glance over the pages 32, 33 and 34 of the Report of the Select Committee (Can. Blue Book) would have sufficed to shew that, in the aforesaid letter, there is no question of the *Imperial Government*, but merely of a promise made on the behalf of the *Canadian Government*, and that, in order to dispel the fears inspired by the rumor that Canadian Militia was on the way. It was unknown at the time that the so called "Expedition of peace and civilization" embodied a share of regular troops and was under the command of an Imperial Officer.

The Honorable Mr. Howe did certainly understand me better than His

Excellency ; for, in his answer, he did not object to a promise in the name of the *Imperial Government*, although he was aware of the one made.

While I cannot dissemble my regret at seeing this misrepresentation of one of my letters to Mr. Howe, I must confess that the feeling increases, when I notice that in the selection made among my correspondence with the Honorable Secretary of State for the Provinces, His Excellency laid aside those that could serve my case. For instance, why not report my letter of 7th May, a part of which reads as follows: "*England* will not endorse such unjust and sectarian views, but hasten those expressed by the Governor-General and his Privy Council. These views of conciliation, peace and forgiveness, I miss no opportunity to express them both privately and publicly *I still continue to assure the people that the intentions of the Government are not changed* About all we have to deplore is previous to my arrival, and unfortunately, perhaps, a great deal worse might have occurred had the *benevolent intention of both Imperial and Canadian Governments not been relied upon*. Fully convinced that such were the dispositions of the authorities, I have always made them the starting point of my explanations. I need not say how painful it would be to me, to think that *I have been deceived*, or that I would be suspected to have tried to deceive others."

These declarations are void of ambiguity and they must have been perfectly intelligible to those to whom they were addressed, still more so than to any others, owing to the personal intercourse I had had with them.

I made mention of the Imperial and Canadian Governments because I had been sufficiently informed, both by word and writing, that they acted jointly. The Proclamation signed by Sir John Young was not issued in his

capacity as Governor-General of Canada, but by the express desire of the Queen ; it was nevertheless countersigned by the Honorable H. L. Langevin in his capacity as Canadian Official. The same Proclamation mentioned in Sir John Young's letter was officially handed to me by the Honorable the Secretary of State for the Provinces of Canada. Forgiveness was the peculiar prerogative of the Crown, and Canadian ministers affirmed that they desired it.

Mr. Howe's answer says : " My Lord, I have had the honor to receive " your Lordship's letters of the 3rd and " 7th May, and am commanded by His " Excellency the Governor-General, to " express his sympathy in your anxieties " and his *warm acknowledgement of* " *your exertions*, in the cause of peace " and moderation."

This was the first letter I received after my arrival at Fort Garry, and being an official answer to the affirmation that I continued to *promise forgiveness*, it would, I think, require an uncommon degree of perspicuity to discover, in its contents, that the events that had occurred, during my journey from Ottawa to Fort Garry, should have been an impediment to my following the line of action, given in the Capital of the Dominion and at Rideau Hall.

What is to be inferred from the fact, that the letters in which mention is made of *forgiveness, relying on the benevolence of the Imperial Government*, are not noticed by His Excellency, while his attention is given solely to the document that repudiates the responsibility of the promise made *in the name of the Canadian Government* ? This may perhaps be accounted for by the fact, that, when the documents concerning the North-West difficulties were laid before the House of Commons, on the 15th April, 1874, my correspondence, prior to the 7th June, was not produced. What remains to be explained is, the producing of communications expected to prove against me,

while others, equally genuine and of the same weight, but proving in my favor, are destroyed or laid aside. The members of the Select Committee noticed this omission with the same astonishment that I did myself, and provided for it, by inserting in their Report, certain of my letters to Mr. Howe, of which I had a copy, and one of Mr. Howe's answers, produced in its original form.

It would be difficult to explain how deeply I feel the injustice of the assertion brought forward in the 13th paragraph of the Despatch. Had Lord Dufferin not been influenced by the exaggerations, and even by the falsities multiplied by the Press and at the tribune, His Excellency could certainly not so completely mistake the nature of the part I acted in the question of amnesty, or he would have avoided the unfair accusation contained in the said paragraph ; he would not have exposed Lord Carnarvon to err so completely in the seventh paragraph of His Lordship's answer, and he would have spared to both, the regret they must have felt, while making me liable to such ridiculous pretensions as those imputed by their Lordships.

I never claimed an amnesty on the plea that "*I went to Red River as a plenipotentiary.*" I never regarded my "*mission or powers as differing in character or extent from those intrusted to the gentlemen who had preceded me.*" I never had the pretension "*that, of my own accord I could promulgate a pardon in the Queen's name.*" Still less was I under the impression that I could "*expunge, on my own mere motion, a principal term from a Royal Proclamation.*"

I beg of Lord Dufferin, and could my voice reach Lord Carnarvon, I would also beg of him, to allow me to inform them myself in what light I have always viewed, and showed forth to others, the character of the mission I accomplished at Red River. If their

Lordships condescend to do me the honor and the justice of reading the following lines, I feel convinced that they will admit that my notions differ greatly from what is surmised.

Far from considering myself as a "Plenipotentiary," I never aspired to more than the rôle of an humble subject of Her Majesty, that an Imperial Officer had intrusted with a message of peace and conciliation for a population that had confidence in me. Far from expunging any part of such message, I knew that my powers were so limited that I delivered it to those it concerned, without even heeding what had taken place before my arrival in their midst; and as it had been given unlimited and without restriction, I did not think myself empowered to limit or restrict it. My orders were to see the leaders; I saw them. I had to assure them of the liberal intentions of the Imperial and Canadian Governments. I did so, using, as far as I could recollect, the very expressions of those that had sent me. I neither said nor did anything I had not been told to say or to do. Had I thought I was a "plenipotentiary," I might perhaps have taken upon myself to modify some points owing to circumstances; I did nothing of the kind, for the very reason I *knew* I had no authority. I had been instructed to act conjointly with Messrs. Thibault, De Salabéry, Smith and Mactavish. Mr. Smith was leaving the place, I could not retain him; the three other gentlemen remained; more or less I conferred with them. All that I did was with their approval, and to meet the views of His Excellency as conveyed by Mr. Howe. *I co-operated with them in their well-directed efforts to secure a peaceful solution of the difficulties in the North-west; and that peaceful solution was secured.*

But the death of Scott was not known at Ottawa!

That is true; neither was it known at Ottawa, on the 6th December, that sixty British subjects would soon be

arrested and kept prisoners at Fort Garry. But this latter occurrence was known on the 16th February, when the Proclamation was officially handed to me; and still, notwithstanding its gravity, it brought no change in the peaceable intentions expressed, and it is evident that it inspired no restriction to the Proclamation of the 6th December, nor to the explanations given; and it had not been told me that in the case of any unlooked-for event having occurred, I should not deliver the message.

The points indicated as essential were: allegiance to the Crown of England, and the acceptance, on equitable conditions, of the transfer of the country to the Dominion of Canada, if such was the desire of Her Majesty.

It is true that the despatch seems unwilling to record any account of the conversations. I must candidly acknowledge that I was not enough of a Statesman to believe that the words of Statesmen signify nothing, when not reduced to writing. I was not aware that, after having heard enough to enable Lord Lisgar to write to me, on the 16th February: "You are fully in possession of the views of my Government," I had to keep no account of all verbal instructions or explanations, and that all that was not written was of no consequence. But then, why require that I should have been guided by restrictions, which, far from being written, were not even spoken?

It would be too painful to come to the conclusion, that advantage had been taken of my good faith and inexperience in diplomacy, to deceive and to make use of me as an instrument, whose action would be accepted or repudiated, according to the requirements of politics.

I was informed of the particular instructions received from England by the Governor General, empowering him to act, not only as Constitutional Governor of Canada, but moreover as special

representative of Her Majesty's Government.

Besides Lord Granville's telegram that had given rise to the Proclamation of 6th December, I was made acquainted with another despatch from the Most Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated 8th January, 1870, of which I give the following extract: "I observe with great satisfaction the anxiety manifested by the Canadian Government to avoid any collision with the insurgents in the Red River Settlement, and to exhaust all means of explanation and conciliation before having recourse to force."

On my arrival at Fort Garry, I made known what had been communicated to me at Ottawa, and, with equal diligence, wrote to Ottawa how things stood at Fort Garry. If the Authorities had given the directions received, because they were not aware of what was going on at Red River, how explain that, on learning the lamentable event of the death of Scott, they avoided, systematically, saying a single word tending to modify the impression they knew they had given me at Ottawa? I made known to his Excellency in Council that I continued to declare, *in private and in public, that the intentions of the Government, with regard to forgiveness, were not changed.* If I was deemed reprehensible in saying that I had been sent to give the assurance of pardon, why was my action not disavowed at the time? why was I not informed that, owing to circumstances, my affirmation could not be sustained; in a word, that those who had taken any part in the death of Scott were precluded from immunity?

Far from fulfilling this simple act of justice, I was left under the same impression, and, as if to encourage the continuation of the same promises, the Honorable the Secretary of State for the Provinces wrote officially on the 27th May: "I am commanded by His Excellency the Governor-General to express his warm acknowledgments of

"your exertions in the cause of peace and moderation," and again on the 4th July: "I trust I need not assure you that your zealous and valuable exertions are duly appreciated here, and I am confident that . . . you will not be disposed to relax your exertions."

If what precedes signifies nothing in the sense of the Amnesty, it signifies certainly that I was not treated with the same degree of good faith by which I was, myself, actuated throughout the whole affair, and that I have been shamefully played upon.

The death of Scott was known at Ottawa on the 27th May, and it was well known at the time that I had assured the people of Red River and their leaders that I was persuaded that the pardon promised by the Governor-General, acting in the name of the Queen, would be granted. It was also well known that the same promise had hastened the pacification of the country. It was not less known deferring a deception in this respect, would only make it more cruel. All this was known, I had written it, and my letters had been received. Consequently what abuse did not the Government make of my confidence when congratulating me on my line of action, if in reality they did not approve of it; when I made known that I had promised, in a special manner, *on the behalf of the Canadian Government,* I was warned without delay that they repudiated the responsibility. If my affirmations concerning the intentions of the *Imperial Government* deserved equal censure, why was the observation not made in time?

How did it occur that my official letters of the month of May were not kept and registered in the department of the Secretary of State for the Provinces, as well as those of a more recent date? Why is no mention made of them, when my pretensions to amnesty are discussed?

The honorableness of the illustrious personages who possess the secrets of

State, may screen them from suspicion, but it is not the less painful, after five years of expectation, to have it imputed that I usurped the title of "plenipotentiary," while in reality I merely conveyed a message as given, and, in such way, that it elicited the felicitations of those that had given it.

I would not shrink from the accusation of not having acted according to the rules and customs of a diplomatist, but in such a case I will be permitted to add that, if a Tourney in diplomacy was what was looked for, a missionary that had passed the greater part of his life in the wilds of the North-West should not have been chosen. Moreover the ability of those who conducted the affair throughout, is not sufficiently apparent to give a right to make me responsible for what remains to be done.

Had I taken upon myself not to fulfil the mission I had accepted, I would certainly have prevented conciliation and drawn new disasters on the country; so my opinion is now, as it was then, that I would have betrayed the reliance placed on me. Instead of peace, war might have ensued; instead of submission, rebellion; instead of a peaceful acquisition of the country, struggles of which it is difficult to foresee the duration and the consequences. I know that my apprehensions may appear imaginary to those unacquainted with the situation of Fort Garry in March 1870. Certain military men treat my notions, in this respect, as lightly as certain Statesmen did my views on the policy of the North-West before the outbreak. Five years of uneasiness, troubles, misfortunes and great disturbance of the public mind throughout the Canadian Confederation, come to show that the knowledge of places and things can provide for deficiency in the political art. Had the message given in March 1870, not been conveyed, just as I had received it, something more momentous and more painful than an amnesty would have to be dealt with.

His Excellency is quite right in affirming that my powers had no greater extent than those of Messrs Thibault, Smith and de Salaberry, but he is mistaken in believing that I assumed more authority than those gentlemen. Even with the belief that my powers were less than those of the Canadian Commissioner, appointed by Letters Patent under the Great Seal of Canada, I have not the slightest doubt that I would not have met Lord Lisgar's views if, instead of acting as I did on arriving at Fort Garry, I had acted on the following argument: "I have a message of peace and conciliation; I have an assurance of forgiveness, but the situation is altered, consequently I cannot deliver my message; I must hasten back to Ottawa, in order to inform the Governor-General and his advisers that what they said could not be an exact expression of their intentions, (as they failed to write the whole of it), and that what was reduced to writing did not provide explicitly for the actual circumstances; I will have nothing more to do with it; so much the worse for themselves if, on my arrival at Ottawa, they have to repeat the telegram sent by Sir John Young to Lord Granville on the 4th April 1870:

"N.... came here from Fort Garry
"with bad news.... it is quite clear Riel
"will yield to nothing but force; things
"now look very bad."

I easily comprehend the degree of importance that His Excellency ascribes to the condition of amnesty as expressed in Sir John A. Macdonald's letter: "Should the question arise as to the consumption of any stores or goods belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company by the insurgents, you are authorized to inform the leaders that if the Company's Government is restored, not only will there be a general amnesty granted, but in the case the Company should claim the payment of such stores, that the Canadian Government will stand between the insurgents and all harm."

Had the explanation of the above phrase been given at the time as it has been since by its author, before the Committee of the North-West (page 107), I would have understood it then as I do now ; still the impression conveyed to my mind was very different.

The Prime Minister at first promised an amnesty verbally and unconditionally, and when I alluded to indemnity for losses, he manifested, as others of his colleagues had done previously, the doubt of the complicity of the H. B. Company in all the North-West difficulties and evoked the propriety of promising a monetary indemnity only on condition that it would force the Company to reestablish its own authority as *a means of effectuating a peaceable transfer of the country to the Government of Canada*. His letter was written and handed to me after the above explanations, which may be void of significance, for those who did not hear them, but were perfectly understood by me to affirm that the condition, in the letter, alluded to a pecuniary indemnity and not to the amnesty, that had been promised without conditions ; and definitively that both would be safeguarded provided *the transfer of the Country was effected without resistance*, the latter seeming to be the essential point in the eyes of the Canadian Ministers.

When I arrived at Fort Garry, the Company's Government had been replaced by the Provisional Government, and that, with the consent of the ex-Governor, the Honorable William Mac-tavish. This Provisional Government, no matter how it may be qualified, was not the less acknowledged by the population at large. The Canadian Commissioner, to avert further complications, had contributed to its consolidation ; the Official Agents, Messrs. Thibault and de Salaberry had, for the same reason, acted in like manner. Could I, coming the last and *without authority*, act in opposition to those who had preceded me and with whom I had been instructed to co-operate ? Was I to

bring about another revolution ? Could I conscientiously abstain from all action, when foreseeing that such a course would be still more pernicious than what had already occurred ? Overlooking the probability of renewed complications, and contrary to the opinion of the gentlemen whom I had to consult, should I defer making known the intentions of the Government that had called me in all haste from Rome ? We had neither telegraph nor regular mail, and it was not possible to get news from Ottawa before six or seven weeks. Spring was approaching with the danger of an invasion from outside ; my arrival had been awaited to come to a final determination, as to what steps were to be taken. If the message entrusted to me proved satisfactory, the Delegates would leave to negotiate arrangements ; if, on the contrary, I was not authorized to give the assurances required, all the negotiations were to be done away with, and means of defence were to be devised. The Provisional Government were in possession of all the properties, furs, arms and ammunition of the Hudson's Bay Company. The entire population could be ransomed and forced to share an action, criminal no doubt, but only the more to be deplored. The Indians had a threatening aspect ; Fenians and American Volunteers solicited leave to come and aid ; Messrs. Thibault, de Salaberry and Mactavish were of my opinion, and many others shared our conviction, that there was no time to lose. Notwithstanding all this, it is pretended that I, a mere messenger of peace and conciliation, should have been silent ; I should have hidden the message that alone saved us from ruin. Had I, without authority, decided that since the Company's Government could not be restored, all the instructions given at Ottawa could not sustain their meaning, and should not be mentioned, although I had accepted the responsibility of conveying them, I would certainly not have met the views of those who had sent

me. So, I am entirely convinced that what I did was what I should have done. Many do not suspect the vexations and pain to which I have been subjected through this question of Amnesty; nevertheless, after five years of reflection, I am more than ever satisfied that I did my duty, and that, instead of abusing the confidence shown me, I fully realized the views, said to be those of the Imperial Government, expressing the desire "*to exhaust all means of explanation and conciliation before having recourse to force.*"

How could I decide that those views were altered, and that the conditions alluded to had more weight than it had been given to me to understand, since it is well known that, on the 22nd of the same month of March, Sir F. Rogers, writing officially, recalls that, "*Troops should not be employed in forcing the Sovereignty of Canada on the population (of Red River) should they refuse to admit it.*"

In speaking of the Fenian movement attempted in 1871, the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba does not fear to say, "If the Dominion has at this moment a Province to defend and not one to conquer, they owe it to the policy of forbearance."

By reading the Honourable Mr. Archibald's evidence, it is easy to come to the conclusion that the "policy of moderation" was in keeping with an amnesty. Lord Dufferin hesitates to repudiate the views taken by the ex-Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, to whom he gives a just tribute of praise. I willingly side with His Excellency, and am of those who think that Mr. Archibald's moderation derived from his wisdom, and that the one and the other, withheld new complications that it was his duty to avert. In October 1871, the Authorities were in peaceful possession of Manitoba, three days sufficed to place a thousand men at their disposal; of this number, hundreds were or had been soldiers, and they could be commanded by experienced of-

ficers. Arms and ammunition were within their reach; the Artillery of Fort Garry was at hand, and still, the Lieutenant-Governor affirms that he was compelled to make promises and to give assurances in order to preserve the Province entrusted to his government. It does not require a great amount of argument to prove that, in the month of March 1870, the situation was incomparably more perilous, in the point of view of both Imperial and Canadian interests; and, since war could not be avoided, unless I transmitted the promise confided to me, I would have been greatly reprehensible had I not done so.

Young officers of the Imperial army detected my actions, and I incurred their ill-will for having as they supposed, deprived them of the opportunity to dip the point of their sword in Metis' blood and to deck their breast with the colors of the North-West. I was not wholly insensible to the insult which the deception inspired; but, this time again, *cedant armæ togæ*, for I cannot disemble that what Lord Dufferin imputes to me is of all that I have read on the subject, what I feel most deeply.

In the 16th paragraph of the despatch, the Right Honorable Earl Dufferin denies the assertion, viz.:—"that the negotiations with the Delegates of the North-West were the result of the promise of Amnesty." As sole proof of the negotiation Lord Dufferin says: "the people of the North-West had chosen their delegates and had consented to treat with the Canadian Government some weeks before the Bishop had appeared upon the scene." A part of the truth is not the whole of it, and as His Excellency does not command the whole of the truth, he will allow me to inform him of what he does not know. I have no doubt that Lord Dufferin will regret having publicly contradicted me.

By a resolution passed unanimously, the Convention held at Fort Garry, accepted, on the 10th February, 1870,

the proposition made to send a delegation to Canada, to treat with the Canadian Government on the affairs of the North-West. The President of the Provisional Government having been elected, chose and made known to the Convention his choice of the persons he would appoint as delegates of the North-West; and the Secretary of State notified these gentlemen of the choice the President had made of them. The following is a copy of the letter addressed to one of them :—

“FORT GARRY,

“21st February, 1870.

“Rev. J. Ritchot,

“St. Norbert, R. R. S.

“Reverend Sir,—

“I am directed to inform you that you have been appointed, by the President of the North-West Territories, as co-commissioner, with John Black and Alfred Scott, Esquires, to treat with the Government of the Dominion of Canada, upon terms of Confederation.

“I am,

“Revd. Sir,

“Your obed't. Servant,

(Signed.) “THOS. BUNN,

“Sec.”

It must be remarked that Mr. Thomas Bunn was not Secretary to the Convention, but had been elected by the Convention as Secretary to the Provisional Government. Let these proceedings be treated as they may, and no matter what name is given to the Delegates, it is not the less certain that those chosen and appointed, as already mentioned, *did not accept their mission, and that nothing was done, relative to the transactions, between the day of the nomination and that of my arrival at St. Boniface.* Moreover, the “Portage movement,” the arrests of new prisoners and, above all, the execution of Thomas Scott, rendered the negotiations more than problematic. As far as regards the departure of the Delegates, I can fairly say that I know more than any one else about it, as it was at my repeated entreaties in private conversations with those gentlemen, that I determined two of them to overcome their reluctance, and to accept

the delicate mission that had been offered them more than a month before, and concerning which *nothing was yet settled.* Messrs. Ritchot and Black would certainly not have decided to leave for Ottawa, had I not been in a position to tell them what I did, together with shewing them the letter Sir John A. Macdonald had written me on the 16th February. It was through me that they received the money for their travelling expenses. They had to be provided with credentials; instructions had to be given them; all of which were furnished on the 22nd March, and not before. These documents were, moreover, signed by the same Secretary of State, Thomas Bunn, and were issued by the Provisional Government. Nothing of all this would have been done; the Delegates would have been neither willing nor able to leave, if I had not previously given the Leaders of the Provisional Government the assurance of a complete amnesty. Mr. Smith's evidence is evoked against me, while the gentleman never said, nor very likely never knew, anything of what I have just reported; and my assertions are repudiated, although I am the only one that has personal knowledge of what occurred on this point. Mr. Smith himself, could not have left the country without the pass that would have been withheld from him as well as the Delegates, had I not, on arriving, made known the dispositions of the authorities, in the same light as presented to me in Ottawa for transmission.

The telegram forecited sent by Sir John Young to Lord Granville, on the 4th April, shows clearly that things were far from being settled when Mr. Smith left Fort Garry, and that conciliation was not expected, the Governor-General stating, “It is quite clear Riel “will yield to nothing but force.” The impression produced by the Canadian Commissioner is soon modified, even in the appreciation of its author, by the news received from Fort Garry,

after his arrival at Ottawa, so that he is enabled to say, at the close of his Report begun the 12th April: "It is far more pleasing to be able to state, which I do with much confidence, that a large majority of the French party have no misgivings as to union with Canada, and that joined by and under the guidance of His Lordship Bishop Taché and other members of the Clergy who enjoy their confidence, they will very shortly prove themselves to be staunch supporters of the Dominion, firm in their allegiance to England."

The contrast between these words and the impression given at the arrival of Mr. Smith, proves that something was being done at Fort Garry, the result of which soon appeared, and it was that result that determined the departure of the Delegates. The contrast being founded on official despatches issued by the predecessor of Lord Dufferin, and on Mr. Smith's Report, cited by the same nobleman, it seems to me that His Excellency might have sought the grounds of my assertions in the said documents, before he contradicted them.

In the 27th paragraph of his despatch, Lord Dufferin says: "An attempt has been made to show that these Delegates really held their appointment from Riel, and were to be considered as commissioned by his Government. This, however, was not so; they were selected, and the terms they were instructed to demand were settled, before the election of Riel to the so-called Presidency." Being one of those that affirmed what the Despatch denies, and His Excellency being aware of it when he thus wrote, he will not be surprised to find that I maintain what I already said, meanwhile observing anew that on this point I am better informed than my Right Honorable contradictor.

The facts, as I have just related them, turn to show that it is in no way certain that the Delegates held their

appointment before the election of Mr. Riel to the Presidency. On the other hand, it is true that the Convention, previous to the said election, had settled the conditions to be demanded in Canada, but this is not the whole of the truth on this question. I shall take the liberty to repeat that the idea of negotiations, as entertained by the Convention, *had been abandoned* before my arrival at Fort Garry, and that it was decided upon, that, in the event of sending Delegates to Ottawa, they would be furnished with another "Bill of Rights" as basis of the settlement to be made. When the Provisional Government, trusting in the assurances given, agreed upon sending a Delegation, they maintained the choice already made. My earnest solicitations having determined the nominees to accept the mission, then came the question of credentials and instructions for their guidance. Both were furnished on the 22nd March. Save the name of the person, the credentials were identical for each of the Delegates. The following is a copy of that addressed to Revd. Mr. Ritchot:

"FORT GARRY,

"12th February, 1870.

"To Rev. N. J. Ritchot.

"SIR,—The President of the Provisional Government of Assiniboia in Council, by these presents grants authority and commission to you the Revd. N. J. Ritchot, jointly with John Black, Esquire, and the Honorable A. Scott, to the end that you betake yourselves to Ottawa, in Canada; and that when there you should lay before the Canadian Parliament the list entrusted to your keeping with these presents, which list contains the conditions and positions under which the people of Assiniboia would consent to enter into Confederation with the other Provinces of Canada.

"Signed, this 22nd day of March, in the year of Our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and seventy.

"By Order,

(Signed), "THOMAS BUNN,

"Secretary of State.

"Seat of Government, Winnipeg,
"Assiniboia."

The list of "Conditions and propositions" mentioned in this letter was *very different* from that prepared by the Convention, as it is easy to ascertain by even the most superficial examination of both documents. The Delegates accepted their credentials and instructions, and engaged to make them the basis of all their transactions at Ottawa. I am perfectly well acquainted with the minutest details of this second "Bill of Rights," although it was not correct to say that I myself had drawn it up. I came to a complete knowledge of it by having heard it discussed by the Delegates in my presence. With or without reason, all the articles of the document did not meet my views, for instance, the creation of a Province then seemed premature. In the month of February, the Convention entertained the same opinion as I did, and repudiated the idea suggested by Mr. Riel on this point. Only a Territory was spoken of at the time. Mr. Black himself, member of the Convention, had, therein, ridiculed the idea of *asking a Province* with constitutional rights and responsible Government; nevertheless, the same Mr. Black, as well as the other delegates, accepted the demand of a Province, together with other articles of this new "Bill of Rights," as a condition of the arrangements he would endeavour to conclude at Ottawa. It was with these official documents and no others, that the Delegates came forward in the Canadian Capital. It was in virtue of this last commission that they offered to treat; and I am quite certain that both Revd. Mr. Ritchot and Mr. Scott would have refused to negotiate, had they not been received officially by Canadian Ministers, in virtue of this delegation; avoiding meanwhile, in public, anything that might compromise their mission. This, I can attest as having been repeatedly said to me by the gentlemen themselves, as well as by others. Mr. Black having never returned, I cannot maintain what attitude he adopted;

but I am perfectly satisfied that he did not betray the engagements contracted before he left, and the said engagements certainly bound him to act according to the instructions given by the Provisional Government.

As proof that the amnesty had been refused, Lord Dufferin mentions Sir Clinton Murdoch's letter to Sir Frederick Rogers (Report, page 193). I wonder that Lord Dufferin did not notice, in this letter, that the "terms" proposed by the Red River Delegates, "as the conditions of annexation to "Canada," are quite different from those alluded to by His Excellency. These new terms, set forth by the Delegates were forwarded to Lord Granville by the Governor-General. Consequently they were not unknown in high quarters. Sir Clinton Murdoch refers in substance to the points 1, 10, 11 and 19, which he considers as inadmissible, meanwhile acknowledging that the others have not the same character.

If Sir Clinton Murdoch's letter proves that the amnesty *demanded in the 19th clause of the new "Bill of Rights"* was refused, it is obvious that the same letter proves that the same demand had been made; and, as it does not appear elsewhere than in the "Bill of Rights," framed by the Provisional Government, it is evident that the same "Bill of Rights" had been taken into consideration by those who negotiated with the Delegates.

What has given rise to several misgivings on this subject is, the having given the same name to distinct documents.

Besides several inedited essays, sometimes called forth, I have knowledge of three "Bills of Rights," drawn up during the Red River troubles.

1.—The first in the month of November, 1869, and forwarded to Hon. William McDougall through Colonel Dennis. It is published in the "Sessional papers of 1870 (page 19)."

2.—The second was prepared by the

"Convention" in January and February, 1870, telegraphed in substance by me from St. Paul, and soon after furnished *in extenso* to the Government of Ottawa. That is the one referred to by Lord Dufferin.

This list is placed as appended to the Report of Honorable D. A. Smith in the "Sessional papers of 1870 (page 12* 10). It was neither given to the Delegates nor presented by them to the Canadian Ministers.

3.—The third "Bill of Rights" is exclusively the work of the Executive of the Provisional Government, the very one that was given to the Delegates on the 22nd March and accepted by them as condition of the settlement to come to Ottawa, without however making of every one of its clauses, as many conditions *sine qua non*. This "*Bill of Rights*" is the only one exhibited by the Delegates and of which they pressed the acceptance. In his notes, written after each sitting with the Canadian Ministers, Mr. Ritchot shows the relation existing between the different points of that "Bill," and the concessions corresponding that were obtained. After all that, I think it is impossible to admit that the Delegates were not commissioned by the Provisional Government, or that the conditions to be proposed were settled "before the election of Riel to the so-called Presidency." I do not wonder at the hesitation to accept these facts, their logical inference being so different from what is easily admitted.

Sir John Young, in his letter of the 16th February, acknowledges that what I did in leaving Rome and in coming to Red River was done "*for the purpose of rendering service to Her Majesty's Government*," and that "*Lord Granville was anxious to avail of my valuable assistance from the outset*." These lines were written under the impulse of fears that the Red River troubles inspired at the time; now that fears are dispelled, my action appears in

another light. According to the Despatch my patriotism, although appreciated, benefited only my fellow-countrymen in Red River. It suffices to my conscience, no doubt, to have done my duty. My heart may be satisfied at having worked for my fellow-countrymen; but, to be consistent with the sense of justice that distinguishes the Right Honorable Lord Dufferin, His Excellency should not think it sufficient, in speaking of Amnesty, to attenuate the bearing of the *ensemble* of my mission, to arrive more easily at denying its details. A superficial reader may discover eulogy addressed to me in the 16th paragraph of the Governor-General's Despatch; for my part, I see something else. Every word of that Despatch had certainly been weighed by the eminent nobleman that wrote them; all their meaning was calculated, and it is not to Lord Dufferin that it is necessary to remark the difference there is to the ear, the mind and the heart of an English Statesman between the following propositions, viz: *The disinterested patriotism of a Catholic Bishop induced him to accept sacrifices, privations and fatigues for the good of his fellow-countrymen*—or this other equally true: *the same Bishop did the same thing for the purpose of rendering service to Her Majesty's Government, according to the desire of Lord Granville, Minister of the Colonies.*

The reader will please not think that I am here craving praise for what I have done; my motive is, solely, to claim justice toward those who have relied on my word.

The 17th paragraph of the Despatch speaks of a private letter from Sir Geo. E. Cartier. As a general thesis, it is clear that His Excellency is right; still the strength of his argument diminishes, when it is recalled that Sir Geo. E. Cartier had been officially selected by his colleagues, to transact the affairs of the North-West, jointly with Sir John A. Macdonald. That since the illness of the latter gentleman, Sir

George was the "*locum tenens*" of the Prime Minister, and the only one with whom it had remained possible to discuss on this subject; for, during the summer of 1870, Governor and Ministers without exception, referred to Sir George E. Cartier as *personally* charged with this affair. As far as the interpretation of the letter goes, I am quite satisfied that if His Excellency had heard it commented on by its author, as I did, even before I had received it, he would find that the letter bears the interpretation that I put upon it. It is impossible for me to admit the supposition that I am so obtuse as to have heard and judged of all in a manner so diametrically opposed to what was meant to be said or to what acts signified.

If circumstances, conversations, private and confidential letters from a Minister or from Ministers of the Crown have no significance, why did the North-West Committee compel me, in the name of the *Canadian Parliament*, to whom the Ministers are responsible, to reveal those conversations and private letters? What I felt the most, while giving my evidence before the Committee of the North-West, was, to disclose secrets and confidential communications, and to appear as betraying the reliance placed on me. Had I known His Excellency's opinion, as to the worthlessness of conversations and private letters, it is very likely that the Sergeant-at-Arms, of the House of Commons, would have had the trouble to take me under his custody. On one hand, I have been forced to disclosures that are contrary to all my notions of delicacy and of social relations; and on the other hand, it is positively asserted that such disclosures are of no real value.

The 24th paragraph of the Despatch alludes to my interview with Lord Lisgar at Niagara, on the 23rd July, 1870. My desire would be never to have been forced to speak of an incident so painful for myself, and so humiliating for others. Sir George E.

Cartier assured me at Montreal, on the 15th July, that I had reason to act and to speak as I had done at Fort Garry; that the Governor-General gratefully acknowledged what I had done, and he insisted upon my going with him and Mr. Archibald to Niagara, to see His Excellency, who would give me renewed assurances of what had been told me, and would be anxious to hear the particulars of the peaceful solution of the Red River difficulties that had been brought about.

I, at first, refused positively to accept the invitation: pressing solicitations brought my assent. I left Montreal on Monday the 18th July; on the 20th., we touched at Kingston, where Sir George was informed that a hostile demonstration was being prepared for his arrival at Toronto, since he was travelling with "traitor Bishop Taché." The impression produced by this news may be easily imagined. Heedless of the insults that, as far as I was personally concerned, excited the utmost contempt, I did not wish to give an occasion of annoyance to my travelling companions, and proposed to return to Montreal: but the strength of Sir George's objections prevailed, and it was decided upon that I would go by Oswego to Buffalo, meet Sir George at Niagara on Saturday the 23d instant, and see the Governor-General. The programme was carried out notwithstanding the immense humiliation I experienced at the idea that I, a British subject, a Canadian in the widest sense of the word, after having conscientiously fulfilled a mission confided to me by the Representative of my Sovereign, I was compelled to land on a foreign shore, because being in my company would call forth the insults of an excited mob, encouraged by leading men. Yes, I repeat, my humiliation was profound, and had I followed my inclination, I^d would have telegraphed to Toronto and gone on, (so as to give the authors of such base proceedings the chance of realizing their project.

At Buffalo, the articles of the American press furnished ample details on the "indignation meeting" held at Toronto on my occasion, and the violent speeches that had been then pronounced, all of which I had leisure to peruse. Had I chosen to publish how it happened that I was then at Buffalo, our neighbours might have observed how the *liberty* and *loyalty*, of which British subjects so highly boast, are safe-guarded in the most populous Province of the Canadian Confederation. I remained silent at the time, and would never have mentioned this occurrence had I not been forced to it. On Saturday, the 23d July I arrived at Clifton House, Niagara, to wait upon His Excellency, and that, let it be remembered, solely at the repeated and earnest request of the gentleman then acting as Prime Minister. I am ignorant of even the rudiments of the diplomatic code, but, if the reception given me by Lord Lisgar be what it exacts I trust I shall never become expert in the art.

Sir George, while paying a poor tribute to the courage of His Excellency, informed me of Lord Lisgar's unwillingness to see me after what had been going on at Toronto. I would absolutely leave at once, for this "*senile pusillanimity*" in the person of the Representative of Her Majesty astonished me far more than what had taken place at Toronto. Sir George was greatly annoyed, and it was merely to spare his feelings that I consented to have an interview with the Governor. *When invited*, I proceeded to His Excellency's apartments; but what was not my surprise on meeting Lord Lisgar at the door, his arms stretched out, and with a repulsive jest and in a voice trembling with emotion exclaimed: "I suppose you are not coming to talk of politics; I cannot talk of politics with you." I respectfully observed to His Excellency that the trip to Niagara had been undertaken solely at the suggestion of Sir George who, naturally,

must have informed His Excellency of the object in view. I offered to withdraw. My proposal seemed to bring a change and I was invited to enter and take a seat. I did so, a prey to the double feeling of respect due to the Representative of my Sovereign, and of surprise at such a reception under such circumstances. I may remark, by the way, that I might have spent my birth-day more agreeably had I not declined other invitations to agree to that of Sir Geo. E. Cartier.

To-day I have taken the liberty to oppose some of the allegations made by Lord Dufferin; but in so doing, I am, all the while, convinced that he would not have treated me as his Predecessor did; for it must be remembered that it was Lord Lisgar's Government that had invited me from Rome; it was by an autograph letter from His Excellency that he gratefully acknowledged what I had done for "*Her Majesty's Government*," the work of conciliation that he had entrusted to me was completed. A Minister of the Crown had somewhat forced me to undertake a trip to which I was evidently disinclined; the same Minister had been insulted on my account; through delicacy for the gentlemen travelling with me, I had been myself obliged to seek refuge abroad. It is evident that under such circumstances I had a right to expect a reception different from that afforded by Lord Lisgar. It was during the interview that His Excellency, without making further promises, left me under the impression that those already made would not be retracted, and when I spoke of amnesty, in favour of those to whom it is now refused, Lord Lisgar showing his Proclamation added: "It covers the whole case." He then insisted upon my conferring anew on the question with Sir George, as being in full possession of his views, and he, Sir George, renewed the assurance that the amnesty would certainly be granted, and that I was right when I promised it.

If I was really wrong, I maintain that it was a duty of honour and justice to tell me so. Moreover had His Excellency or his adviser told me that I had not acted according to their views when promising the amnesty in the way I had done, I would have *been* the first to acknowledge it and to make it known to the interested parties.

If later, I had thought fit to ask for immunity, I would have solicited it on other motives, and all the agitation to which this question has given rise would have been avoided.

I left Lord Lisgar's apartment to give place to the Honorable Adams George Archibald, who was *immediately* sworn as Lieutenant-Governor of the new Province of Manitoba. I would respectfully draw the attention of the reader to the pages 134 and 135 of the Report of the North-West Committee, and then ask if it is likely or even possible that, in the event that the promise of amnesty transmitted was doubtful, the Lieutenant-Governor would have been sworn and then left in the ignorance His Honor assures me he was left by the Governor and the Government? How can the following assertions of Mr. Archibald be made to agree? "Bishop Taché told me at Montreal that an amnesty had been promised. . . "I understood from Sir John Young (at Niagara) that the Archbishop had spoken to him on that subject. . . . I did not *enquire* nor *hear* anything from them as to the accuracy of Bishop Taché's statement about the amnesty." The Governor-General administered the oath to his Lieutenant, in Ontario; the only Minister present was from Quebec, both were perfectly aware of my action relative to the promise of amnesty; meanwhile, the question was being agitated by the press and in public assemblies in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec; and, strange to say, the Lieutenant-Governor was made acquainted, but in a general way, with the North-West difficulties! The death of Scott was not mentioned and

the instructions furnished were such that Mr. Archibald's evidence affirms: "I also stated to the Bishop my own impression that under all the circumstances of the case, the logical conclusion seemed to be that there must be an amnesty." This declaration of the Honourable Mr. Archibald shews that it was not easy for me to find a disavowal of the promise of amnesty, in what I had heard, or in the refusal to enter into further details at Niagara.

Having taken the liberty to oppose certain of Lord Dufferin's assertions, as contrary to exactness of facts and to the situation in which I was placed, I need not say that I equally resent, as inaccurate and unjust, the erroneous suppositions set forth by Lord Carnarvon, in the 7th paragraph of His Lordship's answer. They are so averse to my views, that I cannot dissemble my astonishment at them.

His Excellency the Governor-General, in the 38th paragraph of the Despatch, says: "A considerable portion of the people of Ontario resent the notion that a Catholic Archbishop should have usurped a plenary power of pardon." I can understand this misapprehension of my act, in a portion of the people of Ontario, deriving from violent harangues and publications, that have misled the public opinion in that Province, where, as it has been said, the unfortunate event of the death of Scott was made "a political football." But that the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies should, on the other side of the Atlantic, give echo to what is represented falsely on this side, is what I grieve and wonder at. I cannot sufficiently repeat that *my notion never was that the Crown or any one else had delegated me as a plenipotentiary with unlimited power to pardon crimes.*"

All that is true with those who have abused me in Ontario, is the sacred character they acknowledge. True, I am a Catholic Archbishop, and in the eyes of too many this title alone suffices to

justify the grossest misrepresentations. What humiliation, if the same found its way to the highest social sphere? It was well known that I was a Bishop when I was called upon to leave Rome. I even think that it was the very reason why I was called for, and it cannot be denied that this circumstance secured, to a great extent, the success obtained at Red River; and it would be a crying injustice to repudiate my action, because I am a Catholic Archbishop. I have every reason to believe that such is not Lord Dufferin's idea, but I cannot help regretting that His Excellency thought fit to set forth the thing in that light to the Right Honourable the Secretary for the Colonies.

Earls Dufferin and Carnarvon are undoubtedly more competent judges than I am of what can constitutionally engage the Crown; but what I have a right to affirm is, that while their Lordships draw the conclusions they consider the best, they will not ascribe to me an attitude and pretensions that I never thought of, although others, before them, may have entertained the same erroneous opinion.

During several years, I declared that I had been intrusted with a promise of amnesty; still my repeated and explicit declarations never provoked a disavowal of what had been said to *myself personally*. After five years have elapsed and that the personages, who had made use of me, have disappeared from the political scene or from the scene of life, others come forward to place me before the public under the ridiculous aspect of one who believed he was "*a plenipotentiary, with unlimited power to pardon the most odious crimes.*"

Through devotion to my Sovereign, and for the benefit of my country, I accepted a mission owned by the authorities themselves to be important and difficult. I accomplished the same to the best of my judgment and it proved successful.

As a people, the Metis of Red River

have been faithful to their engagements, and their forbearance has been such that insults, ill-treatment and even murder committed after the transfer of the country, was endured without a single reprehensible act on their part. It is evident that, had the real state of things, as they occurred, been known in England, the obligations I had contracted on the behalf of the authorities would not have been treated as vain and futile.

History will record my efforts to avert the Red River difficulties; the pains I took to appease them; and that, after having pledged my honor, I chose to incur blame and insult, rather than be unmindful of the promises I had made. The same impartial hand of history will consign that, previous to the troubles, my suggestions were not even received with courtesy; that in time of danger, obsequiousness and confidence were exhibited almost to excess; that when all was settled, forgetfulness followed, and that my reward and compensation may be found in official documents devoting me to ridicule.

This injustice increases to the amount of that committed towards those who are of my opinion. When the population, including the Episcopacy of Quebec and others, sign petitions to ask a complete amnesty, it is useless to say that if such an opinion does not command assent, it deserves the respect of those placed at the head of the Administration by which we are governed. Consequently, it was with a feeling of deep regret that I noticed in the 14th paragraph of Lord Carnarvon's answer the affirmation that "*all right-minded men*" should be unanimous in an opinion contrary to that expressed by our petitions. These requests are signed by names too numerous and respectable for it to be permitted to the Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies to exclude them from the number of those whom His Lordship is pleased to consider "*as right-minded men.*"

NOTE.

As Lord Dufferin cites Hon. D. A. Smith's narrative as ground of several of His Excellency's assertions, these references suggest the idea to place in face of Mr. Smith's Report the negation I thought fit to give to one of the most injurious asseverations therein contained. The Rev. Father Lestanc is too worthy of my respect and affection for it to be possible not to protest against the accusation brought against a missionary whose devotedness, zeal, piety and kindness of heart are so well and so advantageously known.

On the 17th May, 1870, I wrote officially to the Honorable Mr. Howe, persuaded that my letter would obtain the same publicity as had been afforded, by the Government, to the unjust accusations that it came to deny. This official letter obtained, as well as those that preceded it, the honor of being sent to England (as it has been written to me,) but was denied the favor of being recorded at Ottawa and never was published.

The following is an extract referring to the accusations of the Canadian Commissioner, against Father Lestanc.

ST. BONIFACE, 17th May, 1870.

Honorable Joseph Howe,

Secretary of State for the Provinces.

HON. SIR,— . . . The report of Mr. Smith charges the Rev. Father Lestanc with a heavy responsibility. I am very sorry that the efforts made by Father Lestanc, to save the very life of Mr. Smith, have determined the gentleman to take the responsibility of such mighty accusations. The desire not to throw any difficulty in the way of settlement determines us to bear silently before the public, any amount of abuse, keeping for quieter times the vindication of our own honor. So, if I take the liberty to mention our names for the present, it is only to the Government and merely to remove what might be, at once, a difficulty in the way. Reverend Father Lestanc had never any share in the leadership mentioned by Mr. Smith, except where human life was at stake; it is naturally painful to him to see a public charge laid by one, who is largely indebted

to him, for the very preservation of his existence. I hope Mr. Smith acted in good faith, but the ignorance of the country and the people has deceived him.

I remain, Honorable Sir,

With much respect,

Your humble servant,

(Signed,) + ALEX,

Bishop of St. Boniface.

O.M.I.

PART II.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE RESOLUTIONS PROPOSED BY THE HONORABLE Mr. A. MACKENZIE TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, OF OTTAWA, CONCERNING THE AMNESTY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 1875.

About a year ago, I thought fit to publish a few pages on the Amnesty. It was useless to attempt a favorable impression on men given to violence: such was not my aim, but what I thought I might expect, was to draw the attention of sensible and judicious men, and consequently, of those prone to moderation.

A pamphlet on the question of Amnesty, by Archbishop Taché, could not fail to meet the attacks of those whose part it is to be abusive, and their task was fully accomplished on that occasion.

Others, too deeply imbued with prejudices or interest, even before reading the pamphlet, hastened to pronounce that it signified little or nothing, and that all it tried to prove was, that Amnesty could not be sustained. On the other hand, personages, whose appreciation I highly value, treated it favorably, and drew the conclusion that Amnesty was a necessity.

Meanwhile, a Committee was selected by the House of Commons, to enquire into the causes of the North-West difficulties, in 1869-70. This Committee was composed of gentlemen, who, with very few exceptions, had, at one time or another, entirely repudiated even the idea of a grant of amnesty, so that the result obtained cannot

be ascribed to their sympathy for the cause. The Report of the Select Committee shows clearly that my assertions were not altogether ungrounded and illusive, and a page of history unknown to many and misrepresented by others, was written. Except some difference in the shades, I was quite conversant with all that was proved before the Committee; all that was added to the evidence brought forward, had been left unmentioned in my pamphlet, through a feeling of delicacy. I had already read all the documents then produced. Even among those that refused their assent to what I had affirmed, a certain number were brought to acknowledge that I had some reason to complain of the way I had been treated. What struck me most in the evidence was that, together with other eminent qualities, certain gentlemen are endowed with a wonderful elasticity of memory. I was certainly not aware that this faculty had power of contraction or dilation to such a degree. At all events, the House of Commons has just affirmed, by a large majority, that it is not for the honor of Canada, that the question of amnesty should remain in its present state. The very words: "it is not for the honor," involves a part of my thesis; by having added that *it is not just*, both of the reasons that have actuated me, in laying so much stress on the question of amnesty, would have been made known.

It is much to be deplored that the North-West troubles have been discussed with regard to religions or nationalities, for such considerations had absolutely no influence on the attitude taken by the people of Red River; and those who have excited prejudices and hatred by an abuse of the sacred words religion and nationality have certainly involved a mighty responsibility. It is unjust, false, and dangerous to say that the unfortunate Scott was executed, because he was a Protestant and an Orangeman. It is equally inaccurate to advance that I plead in favor of the

Amnesty, because those to whom it is refused are Catholics. I solemnly declare that such is not the case. I would have acted as I have done, even had the *ro'es* been reversed. I would have demanded for Protestants or for Orangemen, had I been intrusted with a similar message for them, what I asked for Catholics, in whose favor assurances had been given me. The regret I feel at the death of Scott is sufficient to prove that every man has a right to the affection of his fellow creatures, and that I have the consolation not to be wanting in that feeling towards all, without exception. I pledged my honor to those to whom I was sent, and I have no need of the sympathy I bear them, to feel the responsibility, and consider it so much the more my bounden duty to claim what was promised, as it was the sympathy known to be entertained for them that induced them to accept my word with unlimited confidence. What I have done to redeem my word as given, needs no other motive than the conviction that *honor obliges* and that it, as well as justice, is violated, when obligations are not fulfilled.

I did not demand the Amnesty because the Metis have more or less French blood in their veins. Once more, I would have done so for no matter what party, with whom I had contracted the same obligation in the same way. If our difficulties are to be looked upon as a question of nationality, I do not fear to say that neither the English nor the Scotch would have a right to oppose me; for old settlers in Red River belonging to the above nationalities were not far from my mind nor affection, when, in order to prevent the horrors of a civil war, I came from Rome in all haste, and received at Ottawa the assurances I thought would necessarily restore peace to the country.

These affirmations may seem strange to those who have not hesitated to call me "traitor," "ruffian," and other appel-

ations, that certain public sheets have the privilege of setting before their readers. Those who are acquainted with me will easily believe me, and I am satisfied with that.

The Resolutions proposed by the Hon. A. Mackenzie gave another occasion to bring my name foremost, in order to assign me a role that I will never accept and that I repudiate. I did not know whether this was done to force me to speak; at all events, the obligation of so doing has been certainly imposed upon me, and I will do so in all freedom and liberty. I need not say that I am not a political party-man. I regret to see so many others sacrifice everything else to such considerations. Placed above all influence of this kind, I can express my opinion freely. To those who may object to my treating a question discussed in politics, I will merely say: Why was I called upon to interfere? it would have been much more agreeable to do otherwise.

I shall therefore take the liberty to examine the Resolutions, said publicly to have met my approval. I only wish that these remarks may have the same weight, for those who affirmed my approbation, that they seemed to attach to my appreciation.

If, owing to my position, an opinion *supposed to be mine*, appeared to deserve some consideration, I am confident that an opinion that is *certainly mine* will not be completely resented.

The Resolutions and the motives that support them suggest the following paragraphs.

1.—From the evidence reported by the Committee on the North-West troubles, the Hon. A. Mackenzie, those who have supported his Resolution, as well as those who voted its amendment, it appears: "*That in 1870, the Representatives of the Canadian Government gave divers persons of prominence in the North-West, assurances that a complete amnesty would be granted, and requested that these assurances should be, as they were, communicated to the*

interested parties;" it further appears that: "*the envoy of the Canadian Government, Archbishop Tache, assured the people, bonâ fide, that the Imperial Government would grant such an amnesty, and the Canadian Government did not disavow this action;*" it appears further: *that the conviction that such an amnesty would be granted, facilitated the acquisition of the territory by Canada.*"

I do not marvel that the select Committee that have held thirty-seven sittings, examined twenty-one witnesses, and have been engaged diligently in prosecuting the enquiry, should have obtained such a result. What I wonder at is, that it took *five years* to make such a discovery. It was in 1870 that the promises were made, conveyed and accepted; and that the advantageous result they secured to the Government was obtained; and it is only in 1875 that it appears to the Canadian Government and Parliament. For those who have come to this conviction, it should be a singular pastime to read or to hear what has been written and said during the last five years to deny the promises of amnesty, as well as their genuineness, their weight and their result. How often a smile must have passed on the lips of certain orators and writers, while thinking of the simplicity of their hearers and readers, that they were deceiving! How the abuse lavished on those, who had conveyed these promises, falls to the ground or rather returns to those who proffered it! What a shadow thrown on the brilliant result of an expedition that "*drove away the banditti,*" when it appears that it was the conviction that such promises would be honorably carried out that had influenced those, to whom the negotiations had inspired this conviction. All, in this first motive, was as true, five years ago, as it is now; consequently, it was unfair to combat it so long. All these promises having been made in 1870, why postpone the recognition until 1875?

Even without having the secret of the contending parties, their design is too apparent not to be apprehended. Had the people of Red River been left to settle their own affairs with the legitimate Authorities, all would have been reduced to *refuse admission* to the Lieutenant-Governor coming too soon, and in sending him back to Ottawa, to inform his Seniors that there were British Subjects in that little Colony of Red River; that those men of different creeds and nationalities claimed the privileges, rights and immunities that the Constitutional British regime seems to secure to all those who have a right to aspire to the advantage it offers, meanwhile accepting the obligation that results therefrom.

The Canadian Government have noticed their error, although rather late; easy terms would have been offered or demanded, and afterwards accepted on both sides. Those who had been the first to manifest ostensibly the general discontent would have been the first to evince the joy of all parties, and to offer a triumphant reception to the Lieutenant-Governor, to whom they themselves had refused the entry of their territory. Hon. Mr. McDougall's enemies were wrong in saying that the troubles had arisen because he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor; and they were equally unjust when calling the Metis "traitors," "rebels," "fanatics," "bandits," etc. The whole question was one of constitutional immunities demanded by a population that thought it had a right to them. Individuals, not of the native population of Red River, with or without an official character, were those that aggravated the situation, and who are the first responsible for the misfortunes that ensued, and for the feeling of discontent that has prevailed ever since. This latter feeling would have been done away with, if, after negotiations, settled at Ottawa and approved in England, the promises now acknowledged to have

been made had been fulfilled. Alas, this was not done, and why? Simply because political parties have made of Manitoba, as it were, the arena of their strifes and rivalries. That the ignorant did not learn before this that the amnesty had been promised in 1870, has nothing that I wonder at; but, for well-informed men, there was no need of the North-West Committee, to discover a fact that was apparent from the outset, and which the nature of the negotiations rendered so evident. Those accustomed to avail of public excitement, made the following argument: This is a good opportunity to excite passions and prejudices,—let us blame the Government for having made promises, and place them in the impossibility to fulfil them,—thereby we will necessarily weaken them. The Government organs thought they should combat with the same arms. Promises of amnesty were denied, and to give these denials more weight, in this as well as in the preceding case, all that hatred and violence can dictate was brought against the French population of Red River. These party struggles misled public opinion in some places to such a degree that it was impossible for truth to find access. At this new phase of our difficulties, what a difference had Manitoba been left to settle its own affairs with the authorities!

2.—The Report of the Committee establishes that: *In 1871, the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, in the name of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, called on all the inhabitants to rally to its defence, and especially asked the aid of L. Riel and A. D. Lépine, with whom he communicated officially by writing; that the said L. Riel, A. D. Lépine and P. Paranteau raised a large body of men; that they were received by the Lieutenant-Governor, who shook hands with L. Riel and A. D. Lépine, and inspected the battalion under their command.*

The inspection of troops is not done privately, and the events that brought

about this levy of Metis Volunteers are all consigned in official documents ; so it did not take long to establish this as it did in the preceding case ; and with the help of the North-West Committee, the work was done in three years, four months and four days. For my part, having been acquainted with all this from the time it occurred, having at hand the written proofs, and having handed the same to the Hon. the Minister of Justice in November 1873, I cannot but find that, withal, the time was rather long, considering moreover that all had been published in the newspapers. A poor idiot accused of participation in this action, which he certainly did not comprehend, was sentenced to the gallows, although the sentence was since commuted. It is astonishing to see that those who were so prompt to punish, have been so slow to forgive, when calling to arms and acceptance of military service are considered as an agreement in honor binding towards those who are so called personally and answer the call.

Relative to the events of 1871, as well as those of 1870, the French newspapers were better informed than others in all that was favourable to the cause of the Metis ; this was owing to the simple fact that our friends, in the Province of Quebec, received and believed the intelligence that others would not have heeded. Those who keep a file of the French newspapers of Quebec, can easily ascertain that the information given therein was more accurate than that furnished by the English press, even by those who, concerning the question of the North-West, have not the degree of acrimony that characterizes several of their *confreres*. Would that such tardy revelations could cause it to be understood, that those who seem to know nothing but to give abuse, are not always in the right, notwithstanding their persistence. On the contrary, the violence of the attack, on such matters, should suffice to inspire mistrust. When men of

standing, affirm positively things that they have every opportunity of becoming acquainted with, it is clear that those who will not even admit a doubt and who, nevertheless, continue to excite to feelings of anger and vengeance, are not moved by a sentiment of justice. Moreover, the general elections of 1872 were approaching ; the agitation had to be kept up, and the Metis of Red River were denied the credit, due to themselves and their leaders for the attitude taken by them, at the time of the Fenian invasion.

3.—From the same evidence, it further appears that *Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Geo. E. Cartier, as well as the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, thought proper to request the expatriation of L. Riel and A. D. Lepine for a time ; that proposition was agreed to and money was furnished to help L. Riel and A. D. Lepine during their expatriation ; it appears further, that, during the general election of 1872, at the suggestion of the Lieutenant-Governor, Louis Riel was requested to withdraw his candidature in Provencher in favor of Sir Geo. E. Cartier, who was elected accordingly, and publicly received and acknowledged the congratulations of L. Riel and A. D. Lepine on the event.*

Very short-sighted would they be, who could not detect why this third motive precedes the Resolutions. For to be impartial, mention should have been made not only of what was requested of me, at the beginning of 1872, but likewise of what was urged in like manner, at the beginning of 1874. Both of these attempts are to be found in the same official document, and are the facts of the two honorable gentlemen, who have followed in succession as Ministers of Justice. The idea is the same, and I have not the slightest doubt that the same means of success would have been employed, had I consented to repeat in the last case what I had done in the first. The two learned jurists here alluded to would not, nor could not, enter upon negotia-

tions of any kind with Mr. Riel or his followers, had they been as guilty as it is represented. Two ministers of justice could not ask of two Lieutenant-Governors nor an Archbishop to become as intermediary, to obtain a result that would finally preclude from the action of justice, men who, in the opinion of those Honorable Ministers, would have deserved the punishment they are said to merit. Still less was it possible to furnish, or to be ready to furnish, money to bring about the desired result.

It must be owned that Mr. Riel has been very badly repaid for the disinterestedness he displayed by his endeavors, and that, without any compensation whatsoever, to secure the election of Sir Geo. E. Cartier in Provencher.

The electoral campaign of 1872 excited against the leader of the Metis the inveterate hatred of a man who owed his position to the promise he had made to defend his cause.

The changes brought about in Manitoba enabled this hatred to realize the project then formed to have Mr. Riel outlawed. Thence date a series of facts and of procedures, more or less irregular, that a new Committee on the affairs of the North-West would bring to light, and which, while awaiting such enquiry, leave all well disposed men under the most painful impressions. It is always sad for those, who come to the knowledge of it, to see personal vengeance satisfied, and a political aim pursued, under the pretext of legality. When a parliament acts upon such givings, it may not be aware how far it is misled, but such is not the less to be deplored. I understand the weight of all I advance. Those who, like myself, are not subject to any feeling of hatred, will feel it so much the more, that the injustice alluded to was apparent, and pointed out even by enemies of the pursued.

4.—That from the said evidence it further appears: that, in 1873, Sir John A. Macdonald, First Minister and Minister of Justice gave assurance to

Archbishop Taché, to his colleagues in the Cabinet and others that he had no objection to a complete amnesty, granted by the Imperial Government, and which would, he believed, be loyally accepted by the Canadian people.

The nature of the engagements taken in this circumstance persuades me that they would have been fulfilled this time.

The four considerations that motive the Resolutions establish, with the utmost evidence, that, if we have even a partial amnesty, it is due to the conduct of Sir Geo. E. Cartier, the Honorable Adams George Archibald, the Right Honorable John A. Macdonald, and his colleagues of the Province of Quebec. It is obvious that the Honorable Alexander Mackenzie and those who voted his Resolutions have solemnly affirmed before the country that the promises made in 1870, the military services asked for and accepted in 1871, the request to leave the country and to elect Sir George in 1872, together with the assurances given by Sir John A. Macdonald to his colleagues and to their friends in 1873, are the only motives that determined him to ask for an amnesty of any kind in 1875. This fact is sufficiently patent for there being any necessity for an enquiry to prove it.

5.—The Resolutions then come to say that “*In the opinion of the House, it is not for the honor or for the interest of Canada, that the question of amnesty should remain longer in its present shape.*”

The assertion is quite exact, and this paragraph of the resolutions is in perfect harmony with my humble opinion. It is clear that the interest of Canada requires a solution of those difficulties, but I will be allowed to remark that the necessity was equally imperious before the 11th February, 1875. If the interest of Canada now requires the appeasing of the feeling that pervades throughout the Dominion, the same interest should also have urged the

lished anything, and my silence might have been taken for an assent. I cannot agree to a demand of banishment, when it was pardon that was promised.

In order to secure the Resolutions, it is said that they were framed, in order to meet the views of Her Majesty's Government. As far as I judge, what has been determined seems to be but the ordinary transaction *do ut des*.

With the same object in view, those who are led had to recoil, to meet at a certain point, their leaders, who would not come forward the whole of the way. This idea of *retreat* is suggested by the vote on the Resolutions, and confirmed by the attitude of certain newspapers friends of the eve, becoming foes of the morrow, and beginning, immediately after the vote, to insult the Metis, whom they had professed to defend with courage and integrity. What humiliation would it not be if during the ensuing five years, some who call themselves friends, would repeat what has been said during the five last years, by those who never hesitated to show their bitterness.

It is objected that Lord Carnarvon would never have consented to grant a full amnesty.—Who can tell?—The telegraph has already announced that the noble Lord assents to the Hon. A. Mackenzie's Resolutions, though they do not agree with the last paragraph of His Lordship's answer. Superior men are not obstinate; this is evident in the very answer of the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Lord Dufferin's Despatch. The Governor-General merely expressed his opinion on the whole affair, and the same opinion was taken for granted and entirely approved of. Had the Canadian Government solicited a full amnesty, it would have been granted as easily as a partial one. At all events, it was worth while to make the attempt. Her Majesty's Government would not have refused the Government of Canada, as Lord Carnarvon himself says that

this case is "a question which can be truly understood in all its bearings by those only who, residing on the spot, are familiar with every detail of it."

His Excellency the Governor-General, speaking of my opinion: "that both the Imperial and Canadian Governments, are bound by the promises of immunity" I had made, said, that "The present Canadian Administration have declined to recognize the force of any such obligation." According to the Despatch, it seems that, up to the 10th December, 1874, notwithstanding the Report of the Select Committee, the Canadian Cabinet declined to admit what the Resolutions of 11th February, 1875, prove they have since recognized. Something must have occurred during the interval of two months, to influence the opinion of the actual Administration, even more than the Report of the Select Committee itself. This, I know not what, might have been made known to the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and would have modified the views of the Imperial Government, as it did those of the Canadian Cabinet.

The Honorable Minister of Justice said, on the 12th February, that the details of the execution of Scott *while explaining the severe tone of the Despatches*, had also enhanced the former difficulties and brought about others. It is indeed very well known that the letters published in the "Manitoba Gazette," with the name of John Bruce, succeeded to secure the object for which they were published. A man, moved by the spirit of revenge, paid John Bruce to get his name, to sign the publications alluded to, which he knew to be false, but tending to excite public ill-feeling and to prevent a cool and fair appreciation.

John Bruce, sworn at the Court, denied having ever written the things as they were published with his signature. He moreover declared, under oath, that he had no personal knowledge of what

had been affirmed in his name. The other witnesses likewise failed to prove the same accusations. Nevertheless, we are now informed that official Despatches are moulded on these imaginary facts. Such result is so natural that men of intelligence and integrity are guided thereby. All negations, however true, never suffice to neutralize entirely the evil produced by a wicked assertion no matter how false it may be.

These unreliable informations have produced their natural result in other quarters where it is still more astonishing to find them. Society accomplishes a very grave and solemn act when, invested with a power that can come but from God alone, it decrees that one of its members should be cut off. Hence the right and the obligation to exact that he who is chosen to give vent to the responsibility incurred shall, by the strictest impartiality, act outside of the field in which passions and interests struggle; moreover that he shall avoid all exaggerations of language and all inaccuracy of facts: such exaggerations and inaccuracies always entailing the most dangerous consequences. Justice among Christians, in order to command respect, submission and confidence, should realize the emblem chosen by Pagans to represent it. This observation is inspired by the impression derived from the way in which the political suits were conducted in Manitoba, and by asseverations such as the following, read in the sentence of death pronounced against Mr. Lépine: "*Search in the annals of the barbarous tribes which, for centuries, have roamed over the vast prairies of the North-West and you will fail to find a parallel in savage atrocity.*" This phrase must have been prepared long beforehand, for in the evidences given against Mr. Lépine, there is nothing to justify the words. Had he, who pronounced them, been ignorant of what he had heard before he came to Manitoba; had his notions on the troubles of the North-

West been formed only at the Court of Queen's Bench, of Winnipeg, he would not have used such language no more than the following sentence, pronounced on the same occasion: "*Not a solitary individual has ever dared to speak or write a single sentence, I will not say of justification, but even in extenuation, palliation, excuse or apology of (your crime's) enormity.*" If it was possible in the month of October, to not be aware that something had been said or written in this sense, it has been easy to learn it since. That is the way under the world: Parliaments, Governments, and even tribunals act somewhat with the impression given by letters such as those of the unfortunate John Bruce and other statements that are not of more real value.

I need not repeat that I deeply regret the death of Scott. It grieves me more than the greater number of those who have used violent language on the subject. Still, notwithstanding the pain it occasions me, and, at the risk of bringing renewed abuse on myself, I must say that I am convinced that the execution was carried out, only because those who ordered it thought they had a right to do so, to avert still greater misfortune. While deeply regretting the awful act and the circumstances that accompanied it, I feel convinced that they should be ascribed to inexperience and not to cruelty and barbarity, which are certainly not characteristics of the Metis; and it would be well if many of those who have accused the native population of Red River, would not be liable to a greater degree of hatred and revenge that the Metis are.

An accusation of a different kind, but equally replete with falsity and malice, has just been uttered before the Parliament: it was fearlessly affirmed that, if Mr. Riel is made an outlaw, such is due to Messrs. *Royal, Girard and Dubuc*. If this had come from elsewhere, there might be room for ex-

danger of giving rise to this trouble some feeling, of exciting passions and prejudices, and of throwing obstacles in the way of bringing a solution to our difficulties, of thereby prolonging uneasiness without necessity or advantage, and all this to make political capital. The interests of Canada should have been as dear to Canadians, one, two, three, four, or five years ago as they are now. Why were such interests so long sacrificed? *Through dread of losing power*, it is said by some; by others, *through the hope of coming to power*. This should not be possible. I do not sufficiently advocate *the policy of success at all events*, to be of opinion that, for years, the interest of one's country can be sacrificed, with a view to keep or to attain the Government of it.

Thanks to the author of the Resolutions, for having said that *it is not for the honor of our common country to leave things in statu quo*. This is what I always thought. For you see, kind reader, honor is one of those old words that signifies one of those old things that, in my estimation, are far above success. My domestic education as well as that which followed it always conveyed to my mind this idea of honor, as a bright pharos that should guide man and nations through all the difficulties to be met with. The silence and the solitude of my life, in the deserts of the North-West, have not altered my convictions, nor even perhaps my illusions. The dread of what is not honorable has led me to what is termed a "monomania," which, during the last five years, is displayed in the demand of an amnesty, the refusal of which does not now appear honorable, even to those who had opposed it with the greatest violence.

Yes, as the Resolutions attest, *the facts developed in the said instance, cannot be ignored by the people or the parliament of Canada*. This sufficiently affirms that not only the people, but also the parliament, have not been

aware of what the interests and the honor of Canada required, since several years, in this respect. This was also my notion. The Canadian people are too good, too honorable, and also too interested to have left things as they were, had they known their real condition. The Canadian Parliament is too wise for not having come, ere this, to a satisfactory solution, had not numerous circumstances prevented the truth from reaching them.

The final decision is not far; the country will be released from the fetters that chain it, and, unquestionably, its liberty will be complete.

6.—*That in the opinion of the House, it would be proper, that a full amnesty should be granted to all persons concerned in the North-West troubles, for all acts committed by them during the said troubles.*

This is precisely what was wanted, because it was exactly what had been promised: a full and entire amnesty for all. Had the resolutions gone no further, there was every reason to specify the motives that supported them; for the conclusions follow naturally from the premises. In such case, Archbishop Taché would certainly have telegraphed to the Government to thank them for having come to this definitive solution, and after a few lines to give a public expression to his gratitude, he would have said no more on the question of amnesty. Many others would, like him, have been thankful to the courageous men whose names would have been attached to the settlement of the troubles. The press and the people of Ontario as well as those of the Maritime Provinces would have taken, on the subject, about the same attitude as that inspired by the Resolutions. The people and the press of Quebec, as well as the Metis of Manitoba and their friends, would have thought and spoken very differently from what they think and speak.

7.—*A full amnesty . . . saving only*

L. Riel, A. D. Lépine and W. B. O'Donoghue; that a like amnesty should be granted to L. Riel and A. D. Lépine, conditional on five years banishment from Her Majesty's Dominions."

I must say that such a restriction equally disappoints and astonishes me. It is declared that an amnesty must be granted; because, in 1870, promises were made to many persons of eminence; because Archbishop Taché, acting in good faith, made the same promises in the name of the Imperial Government; that such promises have not been disavowed, and that the reliance on the same has facilitated the acquisition of the North-West Territories; and, now, strange to say! those excluded from the benefit of an entire amnesty are the very men who received the assurances, in the most explicit, direct and personal manner; the very men, who, relying on these promises, brought their followers to accept them and to cease all resistance.

An amnesty is asked for, because in 1871, Messrs. Riel and Lépine were personally invited to take arms, and that they did so; that the Lieutenant-Governor shook hands with them and inspected the troops, under their command; and the very same gentlemen are refused the benefit of a complete amnesty, to which, it is said, their conduct entitles them.

An amnesty is asked for, because in 1872, Messrs. Riel and Lépine were requested, on behalf of the authorities, to leave the country, for a time; and that one of them procured a seat in Parliament to one of the Federal Ministers; and it is precisely Messrs. Riel and Lépine that are banished from Her Majesty's possessions, and that, for five years, period evidently fixed, in order that he, who got Sir George elected, for the last Parliament, may neither be able to take his seat in the actual Parliament, nor get elected in the next one.

Amnesty is asked for, because in 1873 Sir John A. Macdonald, comprehending that the partial amnesty then offered by the Imperial Government would not prove satisfactory, gave assurances that he would take steps, which would result in an unconditional amnesty; and exceptions are made, which Sir John would not even propose, because he knew they would not give satisfaction.

The interests of the country require an end to be put to the difficulty, and it is left without a complete solution. The honor of the country requires that the promises be fulfilled, and it is declared that a part of them will be sacrificed; and . . . I know not who supposes a telegram from Archbishop Taché, that approves of all this. I am very sorry to be once more in contradiction with those who are in power; I know that the liberty I am taking, in thus expressing my opinion, may have some inconvenience, and that *I may have to suffer for it*; nevertheless, I do not think it my duty to be silent. I have not enough of experience, in the art of expedients, to accept one that does not appear to me as either honorable or just.

Inasmuch as I am personally concerned, I understand that my parole is redeemed, since the reality of the promises made to us, and the good faith with which they were conveyed, are acknowledged, their advantageous result admitted, and the approval given by no disavowal of them. Had I only myself in view, I would be silent; such would be much easier and much more agreeable; more agreeable, for myself, in the first place, and perhaps more so for others too; for I feel convinced that failing to approve, silence would please better. It should be admitted that such was impossible, through the notorious bad faith with which a telegram was made or supposed, affirming an approval that I had never given. It may be better that I was forced to speak at once; otherwise I would not have pub-

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When inviting me to come from Rome, the Canadian Government had promised that my travelling expenses would be defrayed. Now, in the interest of appeasing the North-west troubles, I not only came from Rome to Fort Garry, but moreover made another journey from Fort Garry to Montreal and back again; another from Montreal to Niagara *via Buffalo* and back again; ten trips from Montreal to Ottawa, and as many more

from Ottawa to Montreal (without mentioning those made at the request of the North-west Committee that were paid).

For all the above travelling and all that concerns me personally, I received on the 7th February, 1870, the sum of \$1000. As it is clear that this amount does not cover my expenses, I intend to demand the balance from the Canadian Government, in order to help, in so much, the families of Messrs. Riel and Lepine during their banishment.



cuse ; but the gentleman that made the assertion, is too well informed to believe what he affirmed. In the name of justice and common sense, and in the interest of our population, I discard this base calumny. The proceedings to decree the outlawry, have been conducted in such an unusual way (to say nothing more) that the Clerk of the Court of Queen's Bench, in Winnipeg, thought it his duty to disengage his responsibility, by publishing that he had taken no part in the sending of documents. This proves that the thing was done slyly. It belongs to those who ordered or who executed the manœuvre to explain how the whole was conducted. Why accuse Messrs. Royal, Girard and Dubuc who, far from having had anything to do with proceedings, so extraordinary in their nature as well as in their precipitance, have opposed them with all their might? Mr. Royal, the equally zealous and disinterested advocate of the accused ! Mr. Dubuc, who accepted the position of Attorney-General only on the condition, that he would take no part in the action against Mr. Reil or his friends, and who subsequently accepted to be Attorney for the Crown, only on the condition that he might continue the defence of Mr. Nault ! Mr. Girard who, in the Government and elsewhere, always came forward as the friend and defender of the Metis and their leaders !—Names, loyally identified with the cause of Manitoba, are chosen, because it is necessary to mislead public opinion and divert its attention from the proceedings on which so much stress is laid, but in which, most certainly, the Honorable Messrs. Girard, Royal and Dubuc would never have consented to take any part whatsoever. Without wishing to point out all the injustice perpetrated, under the pretext of our difficulties, I consider myself bound to say something on the actual occurrence, because the three honorable gentlemen so falsely accused are amongst the first French Canadians who came to reside in Manitoba after

our troubles ; that they have ever since been devoted to the welfare of the country, and that the injustice done to them is prejudicial to our population.

I shall add a word in favor of another friend of Manitoba, also very unfairly treated, and that, precisely, because he serves us with greater generosity : Mr. L. R. Masson will allow me to express the feeling of gratitude inspired to myself and to our population, by the disinterested zeal with which he vindicates the rights of his fellow-countrymen of Manitoba. I know that Mr. Masson took interest in the North-West, even before he meddled with politics. Inheritor of the important correspondence which the Honorable Roderick McKenzie held for years, with several members of the ancient Company of the North-West, Mr. Masson while studying and placing those valuable inedited documents in order, has acquired an amount of knowledge on the North-West, that very few can command. Such information and the interest it brings with it, have naturally led Mr. Masson to follow, in a special manner, events concerning the population of Red River. Of late years, my personal relations with his family, the respectful regard and the gratitude I entertain for his venerable mother, have brought me into friendly intercourse with this gentleman, and consequently he is acquainted with numerous details, unknown to many others, and that have contributed to increase the interests, however great, that he had already evinced. I have had ample reason to remark that, to extensive knowledge on the North-West, Mr. Masson joins a sincere desire to serve the same country. I am aware of the numerous sacrifices that the honorable member for Terrebonne has imposed upon himself, in our favor ; and since he is attacked and even insulted, on our account, we will be allowed to say that his efforts and services are here duly and gratefully appreciated. If ever the history of Manitoba be written by an impartial hand, his name will

be therein set forth, in noble characters, among the most sincerely devoted friends of the French Metis and of the entire population of the North-West.

While a feeling of gratitude recalls the name of a friend, it, at the same time, loudly says that it should extend still further. As compensation for the regret I experienced while writing the preceding pages, I shall, before coming to a close, afford myself the consolation of expressing my satisfaction and happiness, in considering the attitude taken by those who defended and helped us amidst our troubles and difficulties.

This friendly movement in favor of Manitoba, was more general and more ostensible in the Province of Quebec; still, we have received from elsewhere unequivocal proofs of the most honorable sympathy. Thanks, then, to all those who have benefited us or who were willing to do so. Thanks to the Legislature of Quebec, for having responded to the call of the noble-minded man who placed his remarkable talent at the service of our political accused: the attitude assumed is so much the more appreciated that it was unanimous. Thanks to the population that such Legislature so honorably represents, for having so generously and so earnestly entreated in our behalf. No one, to my knowledge, has been authorized to say that the petitions, showing nearly sixty thousand signatures, have prevented the "severe tone of the Despatches;" but it is obvious that those petitions, together with the efforts of the Press, have greatly influenced the determinations lately come to. Notwithstanding the regret you experience, and in which I share, beloved countrymen, it would be too cruel to imagine that your efforts are fruitless. The lives you pleaded for are saved! The vexatious prosecutions, inspired by caprice or hatred, are about to cease. An important step has been made towards

a definitive solution. A cooler appreciation and a little more courage, will enable us to finish what is begun; and our solicitations will shorten the years of exile. Let us hope that it will not take five years for the question of amnesty to pass definitely and exclusively to the domain of history.

In all that is praiseworthy and generous, the Canadian people always find their clergy at their head or encouraging their efforts. Here, again, we cannot refrain from giving vent to the gratitude elicited by the earnestness manifested in favor of Manitoba, as well for what was done openly, as for the numerous and fervent prayers imploring heavenly protection and mercy.

We cannot sufficiently express to the Venerable Prelates who, also, so kindly came forward to request that the promise made to one of their colleagues be not trifled with; that peace and tranquillity be restored to our population; that an end be put to the excitement and uneasiness that have been already so baneful to many loyal subjects of Her Majesty. Thanks, My Lords, for this generosity on your part. Thanks, for having exposed yourselves to the mortification which was not withheld, and that a little more delicacy would have spared you. A more impartial Judge than those of the earth will keep account of your efforts. The people confided to your solicitude and to mine, unite in a common feeling of respect, love and gratitude towards your Lordships.

May the above pages which I know to be in harmony with the sentiments of those who are devoted to us, prove to them that the knowledge of facts, places and persons, can only add to our convictions. It is with this view that I take the liberty to lay them before my friends.

